

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Gaylord

MARCH 2022

*Embracing people at every age and every stage of life, helping them
to become the most loving version of themselves possible.*

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
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Communications

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Church Service: Sunday, 10 am
*In-person worship has resumed—
please see inside for details.*



Pastor's Column—March 2022

"Lent, Good Friday, and Other 'Downers' of Religion"

Lately, I've been preparing worship and sermons for our new series, based on Richard Rohr's *Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps* which, as many of you know, explores our addictions and a spiritual process for releasing those addictions. I don't know who has addictions to what things, events, places, people, sports, activities and so on. What I do know that almost everyone has them. And we don't like it, and we don't like to talk about it.

The other option would have been to choose *Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of Human Experience* a new book by author Brene' Brown, who studies shame and vulnerability. These are topics we don't want to talk about either. Dr. Brown tells several humorous stories about being a shame researcher and the reactions people have to her work. Even at public speaking events, she's been asked to "please talk about something else." We all have some degree of shame, and some fear of vulnerability. And we don't like it, and we don't want to talk about it.

More on next page...

Then I heard a great podcast, again by Dr. Brown, where she interviewed Daniel Pink, author of a brand-new book *"The Power of Regret: How Looking Backward Moves Us Forward."* I've only read the introduction, but already he has me quite interested by talking about the number of ways people proclaim that they have "no regrets." In fact, one of this researcher's goals is to reclaim the word regret. He writes:

Some beliefs operate quietly, like existential background music. Others become anthems for ways of living. And few credos blare more loudly than the doctrine that regret is foolish – that it wastes our time and sabotages our well-being. From every corner of the culture the message booms. Forget the past; seize the future. Bypass the bitter; savor the sweet. A good life has a singular focus (forward) and an unwavering valence (positive). Regret perturbs both. It is backward-

looking and unpleasant – a toxin in the bloodstream of happiness.

If he is right, then regret is something we all have. We don't like it, and we don't want to talk about it.

All of this comes during Lent, which for some, is the worst part of the church year. We love Easter, but not too excited about the six weeks before it. Lent brings with it a service containing ashes (Ash Wednesday), which most people avoid like the plague. If they do come, there is great fear about what these ashes mean and about why we put them on our heads. Some of that is reaction to Catholicism among Protestants, but much more of it is just the idea that someone would put ash on our head and remind us that "we are created from beloved dust, and we shall return to it." It has a tinge of mortality to it.

Good Friday, same thing. That day recognizes betrayal, brutal crucifixion of an innocent person, taunting, and a host of other negative actions. The service often ends in silence. It can be, from some perspectives, rather depressing. For some people, we don't like it, and we don't want to talk about it.

The hardest thing for us to deal with in our life, I believe, are those things that we would just as soon avoid. The reason, often, is because it stirs up pain and sorrow. What we fail to see is that these same things, as we journey through them, lead to reconciliation and a sense of peace we've never experienced. We deal with our hurts one way or another. Every major researcher agrees – either by choice or by chance.

Daniel Pink reminds us that there is "positive power" to "negative emotions". The purpose of Pink's book is "to reclaim regret as an indispensable human emotion – and to show you how to use its many strengths to make better decisions, perform

better at work and school, and bring greater meaning to your life. In other words, we don't dwell in these negative emotions or experiences, but we use them to grow and find meaning.

The same is true of dealing with addictions (ours or others), naming our shame, and yes, going through all the emotions that Lent elicits. Easter Sunday is a wonderful day, but quite meaningless without the other events of Holy Week.

Each Sunday now we are inviting people to take a journey with us. It can be an arduous journey sometimes, but in the end and along the way we find meaning, and hope, and promise, and peace and a Source of our Being that is closer to us than we ever imagined. Instead of being religious, we learn to be faithful. Instead of being afraid of God, we come to be at peace and find our home in God. Instead of our emotions controlling and containing us, we are set free to become all that God intends for us to be – or put another way – to become the best version of ourselves possible.

I invite you to take this journey together.

Blessings,

Pastor Greg

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

On Wednesday, March 2, we will gather at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary for a brief service in recognition of Ash Wednesday. You may attend the service even if you elect not to receive ashes. It is a service of reflection and should last about 30 minutes. The other Holy Week services are in the works and will be shared in the April newsletter.

PASTOR GREG OUT OF THE OFFICE

Pastor Greg will be meeting Cindy in Phoenix for some vacation time together, March 9 through March 15.

Report from Your Trustees – February 2022 Newsletter

Through January, our income from tithes and offerings of \$8,219 exceeded our budgeted amount of \$7,917. Thank you to our generous church family for starting our new year off on such a positive note.

We've encountered some glitches related to QuickBooks, our computer accounting software, causing a delay in the availability of standard reports for the month of January. Stay tuned for an update in next month's newsletter, but rest assured that Trustees continue to monitor our church's financial well-being.

Thank you for the many ways in which you contribute time, talent, and treasures for the continued well-being of our vibrant church community.

Easter Traditions

Please share any Easter traditions you have or maybe a favorite recipe!

Entries will be featured in the April newsletter.

Traditions can be anything from over the Easter season!

Please send all to office@firstuccgaylord.org





***Come to the Table. An Easter Reflection by
the Visual Arts.***

Music has long been recognized as a way to connect deeper in the worship of our Lord but the visual arts not so much in modern history. For Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday, we want to incorporate art into our worship with visual displays celebrating the theme, "Come to the Table". Each participating artist will be given a passage of scripture to meditate on and create from. On the week of Easter, the creations will be set up in the sanctuary, each piece accompanied by the scripture that inspired it and the artist's statement of how the artist conceived of the piece. Think out of the box for this one! We are all creatives.

If you are a gardener, your piece could be a small table with plants, seeds, nuts, tools.

If you are a painter, paint a picture.

If you are a poet, write out your thoughts.

If you are a textile artist, create a piece to hang or display.

If you make maple syrup, create an installation with candles and jars of syrup.

If you are a carpenter, create a piece out of wood.

Etc. Etc!!

*We would love to have you join us. Contact Sharon Wade for information
and to receive your scripture passages. 989-619-6029.*

Breathing Under Water
By Richard Rohr
Book Study Schedule/Topics

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89372092567>

Book Study Dates:

March 3 Chapters 2 and 3

March 17 Chapters 4 and 5

March 31 Chapters 6 and 7

~We will not meet in April ~

May 5 Chapters 8 and 9

May 26 Chapters 10 and 11

June 2 Chapter 12 and Postscript

Announcements

Jessica's Email—recently, I've had several emails go to my "junk" folder from many of you! If you don't hear back from within 24-48 hours, please try reaching out by phone. I am not sure what is going on with Outlook and why suddenly this is happening.

NEW BOOK STUDY – "Breathing Under Water" by Richard Rohr. Meeting via Zoom every other week. Please contact office if you would like a copy, books are \$15 each. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89372092567>

Ash Wednesday Service—will be held at 7pm, March 2.

First Sundays —On the first Sunday of each month, all students from K-12 will be meeting together for a special project. This may involve a field trip on a related subject. A permission slip will be required for the field trips. **The class will meet at 9:30** and end at 11:00 unless otherwise notified. Students are encouraged to bring friends. If you have any questions, please contact Brenda Brummel (brendabrummel@me.com) or 810-623-1691 (call or text.)

Coffee Hour News –Coffee Hour News – in addition to normal in-person coffee hour, we will have a virtual option, which will take place on the LAST SUNDAY of each month ONLY. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81182790126>

Name Tags – if you are in need of a name tag, please let Jessica in office know.

Bible Study NEW LINK– every Thursday at 11:00am! All are invited. Please join us virtually by using either the following link or phone number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84612895017>





2022 Flower Schedule

January: Margaret Hafner and Dave Henson

February: Margaret Hellenberg

March: Jeannine Wambold

April: Cathy Otto

May: Bill and Maxine Dely

June: Joanie Sietsema

July: Helen Mate

August: Evelyn Pratt

September: Sallie Anderson

October: Vicky Rigney

November: Louanne Spearman

December: Christian Ed.





5 for 5

from your Reaching Out Team

Final 2021 Numbers:

OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission)

Basic support for the Michigan Conference and National Settings.

Collected on an ongoing basis

Received to date: \$473

One Great Hour of Sharing

Supports partners in countries with ministries that fund health, education and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries and both international and domestic response.

Collected in April

Received to date: \$344

Strengthen the Church

Supports church growth, pastoral and lay leadership development, young and young adult ministers within conferences.

Collected around Pentecost

Received to date: \$94

Neighbors in Need

One third supports Council for American Indian Ministry and two-thirds is administered to Justice and Witness Ministers to support a variety projects. Due to Covid-19 the elected UCC officers have deemed this to be a priority.

Collected in October

Received to date: \$149

Christmas Fund

Provides direct financial assistance to retired UCC ministers and lay employees and spouses.

Collected in December

Received to date: \$774

Current Meeting Times

All are welcome to “attend” these meetings

Reaching In will meet the first Monday of each month at noon:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84945686588>

Reaching Out will meet the third Monday of each month at 7 PM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83220896539>

Council will meet the second Wednesday of each month at 7PM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85297662581>

Trustees will meet the third Wednesday of each month at 11:00 AM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85470391561>

Richard Rohr Book Study meets Thursdays at 7pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89372092567>

Bible Study meets Thursdays at 11am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84612895017>

Virtual Coffee Hour Link (in addition to in-person)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81182790126>

~ In Our Prayers ~

As a reminder, in an effort to respect each individual's privacy and private wishes, prayer requests will only be printed once permission has been given.

During the month of March, the UNA is holding the Cadillac First Congregational Church in prayer

The Roundy Family—as they grieve Larry's recent passing.

Roy Wolf and Family— as they grieve Cleveann's passing

Maxine Dely—as she deals with ongoing balance issues.

Sandra Soderberg – as she is experiencing trauma with one eye.

The Boughner Family – on the recent passing of Jim's brother, Bernie.

Don Storing and Family – on Mardee's recent passing.

John Hellenberg

Gloria House's granddaughter, Madison Crawford – as she suffers from cataplexy in narcolepsy along with other neurological struggles. She is now at home and adjusting to new medication which seems to be helping but is still in need of prayers.

Brad Derenzy—as he has continuing health struggles.

Ariah House – as she is finally home but still in need of prayers. She will be traveling to Grand Rapids for monthly infusions.

Mardee Storing's daughter, Lori

All of those working on the frontline to fight COVID-19, those that are considered essential workers, those without jobs, those ill, and those affected by this pandemic in anyway.

Prayer requests are received by the church office. Names will appear on the list for two months; please let the office know if this time needs to be extended, or if it is time to remove a name.



Prayer Requests

Birthdays and Anniversaries

March Birthdays

6 Pete Amar
8 Natassja English
11 Eric Anderson
12 Roger Brummel
12 Kay Boughner
14 Maryetta House
23 John Hellenberg
27 Carol Lienerth
30 Ryan Anderson

March Anniversaries

13 Bo & Carol Leser
28 Norm & Pat Dressel





March 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Ash Wednesday Service 7pm	3 Virtual Bible Study, 11am Book Study, 7pm	4 Community Meal 4pm	5
6 Worship, 10am Coffee Hour	7 Reaching In, 12pm Virtual Council 7pm	8	9	10 Virtual Bible Study, 11am	11 Community Meal, 4pm	12
			Greg Gone			
13 Worship, 10am Coffee Hour Daylight Saving	14	15	16 Trustees, 11am	17 Virtual Bible Study, 11am Book Study, 7pm	18 Community Meal, 4pm	19
			Greg Gone			
20 Worship, 10am Coffee Hour	21 Reaching Out, 7pm	22	23 Church Book Club, 1pm	24 Virtual Bible Study, 11am	25 Community Meal, 4pm	26
27 Worship, 10am Virtual Coffee Hour (last Sunday)	28	29	30	31 Virtual Bible Study, 11am Book Study, 7pm		